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The prints choose whom they love...

...and there is no salvation but surrender.

-Frank Lloyd Wright

A History of Japanese Woodblock Prints

Capturing a realm of unyielding beauty and endless pleasures, ukiyo-e translates to “pictures (-e) of the floating world (*ukiyo*).” While this term immediately calls to mind lavish courtesans and dynamic actors, the idea of *ukiyo* predates these vibrant characters. At its Buddhist origin, the concept of *ukiyo* refers to the transient and troubled nature of human life. By the 17th century, this “floating world” underwent a drastic transformation. Shaking its somber roots, *ukiyo* turned its concentration from sorrow to pleasure. This dramatic shift in ideology partnered with the rise of an equally revolutionary art form: the woodblock print.

From the Edo period (1603-1868) to Japan today, this ancient technique has not only developed as a masterfully perfected, distinctly artistic process, but also defined itself through its constant evolution. Whether rendering the opulence of Edo’s pleasure district or abstracted explorations of urban reality, Japanese woodblock prints celebrate a beauty, sensitivity and vitality intrinsic to the culture that produced them.

A Japanese woodblock print is always said to be the work of the artist, but in truth it is the joint effort of the ‘ukiyo-e quartet’—the artist, engraver, printer and publisher. The process begins with the artist, designing an image that is then pasted onto a finely prepared cherry woodblock. The engraver follows the artist’s lines with a sharp knife, skillfully hollowing out the intervening spaces. Once carved, the key block is a work of art in of itself. This block is then inked with *sumi* (black ink) and a sheet of dampened, handmade mulberry paper laid upon it. The printer rubs the paper with a *baren* (flat circular pad) until the impression is uniformly transferred. This key block impression establishes the design’s outlines

and the *kagi kento* and *bikitsuke kento* (guide marks) used to align each subsequent color. For a color print, the artist then indicates the color scheme and a separate block is carved for each hue. The printer rubs the ink onto the block and layers each color atop the key block impression. Finally, the publisher distributes the finished work to eager audiences. As the art of woodblock printing developed over the centuries, the artist became further involved in the process, completing each step him or herself by the 20th century.

Ukiyo-e:

Images of the Floating World

The rise of the woodblock print is inextricably tied to the historical and social factors of the Edo period. By the early 17th century, the ancient feudal wars had ended and Japan entered an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity. The new Tokugawa Shogunate moved the capital from Kyoto to Edo (present-day Tokyo) and instituted a policy of *sankin kotai*. Meaning “alternate attendance,” this edict required provincial lords (*daimyo*) and their households to rotate residence between their regional homes and the capital. This measure not only kept local power in check, but also spurred Edo’s rapid urbanization. Surpassing one million residents¹, Edo became Japan’s largest city and allowed the merchant class to thrive. For the first time in Japanese history, a middle-class emerged and a demimonde arose. Catering to Edo’s vast population of pleasure seekers, both samurai and *chonin* (townspeople) alike, this ephemeral realm revolved around the Yoshiwara and kabuki theater.

Both centers of the floating world dealt in pleasure. The Yoshiwara offered the beautiful, the sensual and the physical, inviting

its customers into a fantasy of love or lust. To visit this licensed prostitution district, patrons were required to travel across land and water; ripe with anticipation by the time they arrived. This mysterious and illusory world operated by its own rules, developing its own dialect, festivals, and even conception of time. With 120 minutes in every hour, "in the Yoshiwara, even the clock tells lies." ² Upon entering the main gate, visitors could purchase guidebooks to learn the intricacies of each brothel, the roster of elite courtesans (*oiran*), and words of wisdom for this district of "femme fatales."

Whether seeking one of the lower-ranking courtesans in *barimise*, the custom of sitting in the window as to allow "window shopping," or arranging to meet with a famed *oiran*, the patron of the Yoshiwara could indulge in various levels of fabricated romance. Sold by her family to the brothel at age seven, a courtesan's rank would be determined by age 11 or 12. Though educated in etiquette, conversation and the arts, even the highest-ranking courtesan was a prisoner, unable to escape the crushing debt of her purchase price. Yet, even caged and captive, these women became the epitome of elegance and fashion at the hand of the ukiyo-e artist. This romanticized courtesan dominated the genre of *bijin-ga*, or beautiful women, throughout the development of ukiyo-e.

In the neighborhood of Tsukiji, kabuki theater served a visual feast of dramatic pleasures. Featuring only male performers after 1629, these plays were rowdy affairs. The theater, like the Yoshiwara, was one of the few places frequented by both the samurai and *chonin* classes despite the strict stratification of Edo society. It was divided into sections, tiered boxes and the main pit. From tales of revenge to tragic love-suicide stories, these highly stylized kabuki productions served as a major impetus for the growth of ukiyo-e. The two arts engaged in

a symbiotic relationship: theaters depended on prints for advertisement, whereas the ukiyo-e artists profited and developed their art form through kabuki subjects. Presenting one or two characters in dramatic poses, ukiyo-e portraits captured the distinctive costumes and recognizable makeup of favorite roles to alert the city to coming attractions.

Despite the otherwise strict policies of the Tokugawa Shogunate, travel regulations were relaxed during the 19th century. A newly authorized wanderlust enabled the genre of *meisho-e*, or famous place pictures, to dominate ukiyo-e. A far cry from the idealized and atmospheric traditional Japanese landscape genre, *meisho-e* present recognizable scenes of Edo-period Japan, inviting their viewer to capture a memory or revel in his or her travel aspirations. From the incorporation of Western perspective to inventive compositional explorations, *meisho-e* carried all the charm and daring of the floating world to the Japanese landscape.

By mid-century, ukiyo-e prints achieved extraordinary popularity. While the shogunate issued a battery of reforms throughout the 18th century, the images of indulgent beauties and vibrant kabuki actors ignored and evaded restriction until the 1840s. The Tenpo Reforms (1841-43) crashed upon the stars of the floating world with unexpected force. Restricting the depiction of actors and courtesans, ukiyo-e artists added landscapes, warriors, ghosts and scenes of everyday life to their oeuvre.

Though primarily used to disseminate Buddhist scripture until the 17th century, the woodblock became an unmistakable art form in the hands of Edo's artists. While the product of Edo society, ukiyo-e equally shaped the development of this unique culture by promoting its humor, beauty, fashions and heroes. However, modernity's impatient knocking soon disturbed the floating world.

An End to Isolation: Eastern Modernization

In 1853, Commodore Perry's "black ships" docked in Edo Bay. Bearing President Millard Fillmore's invitation to establish trade and diplomatic relations with the U.S., Perry left with his demands unmet and a promise to return in a year's time. Wary of the Western world's propensity for gunboat diplomacy, the Tokugawa Shogunate decided to engage in foreign trade upon Perry's return in 1854, ending over 250 years of *sakoku* (closed country). *Yokohama-e* prints recorded and circulated Japan's first impressions of the foreigners that poured into Yokohama.

With the end of isolation, modernization progressed rapidly, terminating the Tokugawa Shogunate and dissipating the culture of the floating world. As power returned to the imperial line and emperor Meiji assumed the throne, Japan adopted a policy of *Bunmei Kaika*, or "civilization and enlightenment." From Western clothes and pastimes, to exciting new inventions from overseas, Japan absorbed the massive influx of the foreign. Meiji period (1868-1912) prints reflect this era of anxious change. Presenting Emperor Meiji in Western military garb, triptychs boasting the "black ships," and Western fashions, these works reflect Japan's development of military might and booming industry.

A particularly consequential import was the camera. While ukiyo-e prints have been an undeniable art form since inception, the woodblock also served as the most efficient means of image reproduction pre-photography. Through the woodblock print, Meiji artists made sense of a transitioning world with a familiar medium. Still, even the woodblock felt the pull of the modern. Synthetic dyes replaced natural dyes as art-

ists worked in a whole new system of color, rich in striking reds and vibrant purples. Although many scholars cite the opening of Japan for a perceived decline in ukiyo-e, an incredible creativity rose from this tumult of transition.

Romancing the West: Japonisme

Japan's rapid modernization stemmed from a fear that the traditional would be perceived as barbaric and invite imperialist advances. However, these expectations were not met as expected. As Edo's demimonde quickly faded in Japan, the "images of the floating world" reverberated throughout the West. Arriving in Europe as early as the 1830s, the prints seen at the Paris International Exhibition of 1867 set a fire in the hearts of European art collectors. In the U.S., Whistler, Fenollosa and Bigelow are just a few of the great American ukiyo-e collectors. These early collections remain strongholds of ukiyo-e masterworks throughout American and European museums.

By the 1870's, ukiyo-e prints reached the height of fashion, inciting a mania amongst art enthusiasts and the West's greatest artistic minds. From Monet to Degas, Van Gogh to Toulouse-Lautrec, Western artists were forever changed by the compositional daring and unfaltering beauty of ukiyo-e. Such artistic fervor gave rise to Japonisme. This movement reveals the Western fantasy of Japan, not a true reflection of Japanese art. From prints and paintings, to the decorative arts, Japonisme incorporated aspects of Japanese composition, color and subject matter. Woodblock prints provided a particularly strong source of inspiration. The influence and admiration of Japanese art is undeniable in this Western movement.

Defining Modern Identity: Shin Hanga and Sosaku Hanga

The aggressive policies of the Meiji period established an outwardly modern nation, but Japanese artists continued to search for a modern identity. The Taisho era (1912-1926) provided a brief period of comfort and freedom, enabling the emergence of the two major print movements of the 20th century: shin hanga, or “new prints,” and sosaku hanga, or “creative prints.” In 1923, the Great Kanto Earthquake devastated Japan. After decades of unfettered growth, the already tenuous national sense of security was rattled and soon lost with the beginning of the Showa era (1925-1989). Between WWI and WWII Japanese artistic identity became divided; shin hanga represented tradition, sosaku hanga foreign influence. As Japan searched for its social and political role, its printmakers reflected this internal confusion.

Through growing realism, Impressionist techniques, and a newfound global audience, shin hanga considers traditional Japanese themes through modern eyes. In the national excitement for all that was foreign, woodblock artists discovered that the greatest Western artists had found inspiration in Japanese ukiyo-e masters. While many shin hanga artists studied Western-style painting, they used their training to revive distinctly Japanese subject matter. From sensual *bijin* and expressive actors, to atmospheric landscapes and quiet city streets, the principal genres of ukiyo-e reasserted themselves with renewed vigor. At the turn of the 20th century, Shozaburo Watanabe was one of several publishers who recognized this rampant Western demand for an idealized Japan. Artists leveraged this foreign audience to nurture these concurrently nostalgic and innovative prints. Shin hanga's eager and

expanded audience encouraged publishers to introduce limited edition printing and increased selling price.

Not all shin hanga artists remained tethered to publishers. Though these artists supervised and experimented within all phases of the printmaking process, he or she relied on the traditional ukiyo-e quartet: artist, carver, printer and publisher. As more artists studied Western movements, a sense of artistic autonomy swelled beyond this traditional division, leading several artists to establish their own studios. Japan's new modern identity not only changed appearance of its prints, but also the attitude and process behind it. This search for artistic sovereignty was fully realized through sosaku hanga.

The sosaku hanga, or “creative print,” movement arose from a central tenant: the artist must participate in every aspect of production. Artists shed the traditional delegation and explored each role themselves. The act of printmaking and the carving itself adopted a more spontaneous, expressive attitude, heavily influenced by the artistic explorations of European, namely French, printmakers. Originally excluded from Japan's formal art world, sosaku hanga began on the pages of magazines. The *komasuki*, a curved chisel, became the pencil of the sosaku hanga artist, carving into soft *katsura* wood. Cherry remained in use, but *katsura* lifted the size restriction of traditional woodblock printing. As tendencies shifted from the figural to abstraction, oil-based inks were introduced to achieve a velvety texture.

Together shin hanga and sosaku hanga defined the modern period. Even if strikingly contradictory at first glance, both artistic movements sought an identity somewhere between centuries of rich cultural tradition and rapid modern global identity.

Inherent Continuity, Deliberate Discord:

Woodblock Printmaking in Postwar Japan

While *sosaku hanga* had fallen out of favor during the nationalistic zeal of WWII, these prints flourished following the war. Considered the second swell of the *sosaku hanga* movement, these works were cohesive in style. American GIs provided a significant stimulus for this revitalization. Though the Western taste for a romanticized dream of Japan fueled the *shin hanga* movement during the 1930s, American GIs rejected these nostalgic works for the expressive outpouring of *sosaku hanga*. William Hartnett was entrusted with the organization of cultural activities for the occupational forces. Presenting several *sosaku hanga* exhibitions, Hartnett introduced these works to a new audience and welcomed the movement into an era of confidence. Following the end of the occupation in 1952, the movement abandoned group cohesion to focus solely on the individual. *Sosaku hanga* is inseparable from contemporary Japanese printmaking. The sense of artistic autonomy that matured with the “creative print” artists course

through today’s printmaking community.

As the print movements of centuries before, contemporary Japanese prints wrangle with the realities of our time, a world of urban density and ravenous sprawl. Influences span time and place, media and mindset, but the woodblock medium grounds contemporary prints in tradition. As in the Edo period, print artists are responding with a sensitivity to tone, texture and line in the face of an ever-changing reality. Even as artists innovate traditional printmaking, using drills and concrete, lithography and screen-printing, the woodblock remains pertinent. Throughout the Edo period, a time of peace and isolation, *ukiyo-e* captured the floating world in all its vitality. The years of the Meiji, Taisho and Showa eras are defined by transformation, conflict and their kinetic nature. Accordingly, the print movements of contemporary Japan reflect the oft-discordant complexities of the modern world, always with the elegance, sensitivity and warmth of the woodblock tradition.

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1. Jenkins, Donald. *The Floating World Revisited*. Honolulu: Portland Art Museum and University of Hawaii, 1993. Print, 7.
 2. Ibid, 16.

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Moronobu (c. 1618 - 1694) 師宣

The son of a respected artisan in Awa province, Moronobu Hishikawa was born Moronobu Furuyama. He began his artistic career drawing embroidery patterns with his father, a textile dyer and embroiderer. In 1658, Moronobu moved to Edo to apprentice in painting, where he studied Kano, Tosa, Hasegawa, and genre painting, largely depicting *bijin* (beautiful women) in profile. He soon shifted his medium, becoming a prolific illustrator. His first known book is signed and dated 1672. Through monochrome woodblock printing Moronobu produced around 60 *ehon* (illustrated books), many albums of *shunga* (erotic prints), and single-sheet prints depicting the pleasure-filled world of Edo. The majority of these prints are unsigned and very few of the single prints survive today. He passed away in 1694.

Moronobu is considered the father of ukiyo-e. While some may credit him as the founder, this is not entirely accurate. Instead, his dramatic and innovative style represents the first mature form of ukiyo-e, consolidating earlier styles and setting the standard for artists to come. Moronobu's prints play with parody and literary themes, taking established tales and framing them in the world of Edo. These works formed the basic styles and popular genres of ukiyo-e.

One Night of Adoration

Ehon: Tales of Romance

Medium: Woodblock Print (sumizuri-e)

Date: c. 1680

Size: 10.5" x 7.25"

Provenance: Kronhausen Collection

Ref. #: JPI-22062





Masanobu (c. 1686 -1764) 政信

Born Shinmyo (Chikatae) Okumura, Masanobu was an ukiyo-e painter, printmaker and publisher in Edo. Though largely a self-taught artist, he studied with Kiyonobu for a time. Masanobu owned a book and print shop, illustrating his first book in 1701. He was influenced by the work of Moronobu, Kiyonobu and Sukenobu. Opening his own publishing house circa 1724, Masanobu began to explore different pictorial techniques and formats for single-sheet prints. He not only published his own prints, but also those of his student Toshinobu. While Masanobu was one of the first artists to make the shift from hand coloring to the early form of printed color, he passed away before the development of full-color *nishiki-e* (brocade pictures). He is particularly known for his beauties and *shunga* (erotic pictures). One of the earliest forms of ukiyo-e, *shunga* provided both entertainment and instruction.

An innovator of ukiyo-e, Masanobu is revered for his dynamic and exciting “singing line,” as well as the intimate, tangible interactions between his subjects. From the linear mastery of *sumi-e* (black and white) to gently colored *benizuri-e* (rose-colored pictures), Masanobu consistently stood at the forefront of ukiyo-e.

Happy Dreams

Medium: Woodblock Print (sumizuri-e)

Date: c. 1680

Size: 8.5" x 12"

Ref. #: JP1356





Kiyohiro (1708 -1776) 清広

The Torii school represented the mainstream ukiyo-e culture during the second half of the 18th century. Though one of the most beloved artists of the Torii school, little is known about Kiyohiro. Producing the majority of his works during the 1750s and 1760s, he mainly designed *benizuri-e* (rose-colored pictures), an early form of color printing. Characterized by a pink and green color scheme, these works could include up to five different hues. This color could be printed or applied by hand. Kiyohiro worked in a variety of sizes, each print bearing an aspect of distance, a magic just out of reach. He is known for his clean, flowing line and a strong geometric presence. The majority of Kiyohiro's works present young men and women in genre scenes, or actor prints. His prints suggest the influence of his contemporaries Kiyomitsu and Toyonobu.

Kabuki Actor Onoe Kikugoro

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Matsumura Yahei

Date: c. 1756

Seal: Kiyohiro

Signature: Torii Kiyohiro sho

Size: 14.25" x 6.5"

Ref #: JPI-21640





Kiyotsune (fl. 1757 – 1779) 清経

The son of a theatrical program publisher, Kiyotsune Torii grew up in Edo's art scene. During his time, the Torii school was the preeminent producer of actor prints. He began his ukiyo-e training under Kiyomitsu, but drew strong inspiration from the prints of Harunobu. Kiyotsune's familial connection with the theater shines through in his work. Specializing in *yakusha-e*, or actor prints, his figures appear elegant and graceful. In 1741, artists began to experiment with printed color. During the 1740s and 1750s, rosy pinks and pale greens were printed within the bold lines of the print. Kiyotsune captured the beauties of Edo with a shy and delicate femininity. While his *bijin* (beautiful women) are idealized, they are distinct from those of his teacher. In addition to single-sheet prints produced in the Torii school, Kiyotsune was a prolific illustrator of *kibyoshi*, comic-like illustrated books. He produced over 130 such *kibyoshi* over the course of his career.

Two Lovers: Sanokawa Ichimatsu as Ohana and Nakamura Denzo as Hanshichi

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Okumura

Date: c. 1760

Signature: Torii Kiyotsune ga

Size: 10.75" x 5.5"

Ref #: JP2002





Harunobu (1724 – 1770) 春信

While little is known about his early life, Harunobu Suzuki (né Hozumi) lived and worked in Edo. Said to have been the student of Shigenaga, Harunobu's early actor prints suggest the strong influence of Toyonobu, Sukenobu and the Torii school. Though Harunobu began with actor prints, his later work focused on young girls and the tantalizing courtesans of Edo. He produced over 500 printed works, as well as many paintings, before his death in 1770. In the spring of 1765, Edo saw the first *nishiki-e* ("brocade pictures" or full-color prints). Commissioned by wealthy patrons, the first full-color prints took the form of *egoyomi* (calendar prints). Intricate and lavish, these private works were soon released in separate, public editions through publishers and booksellers. Harunobu used *nishiki-e* to capture the urban, everyday world of Edo in brilliant color. He is considered a true luminary of ukiyo-e, a talent beyond compare. From *shunga* (erotic prints) to classical poems, he is a master of color. Harunobu's genius is particularly apparent in his depictions of young, innocent women. Presenting a delicate, youthful vision of idealized femininity, he influenced many artists to come.

Autumn

Series: The Thirty-Six Poets

Poet: Kiyohara no Motosuke

Medium: Woodblock Print

Date: c. 1768

Signature: Harunobu ga

Size: 11" x 8.25"

Ref. #: JPI-21026





Shunsho (1726 - 1792) 春章

Shunsho Katsukawa (né Miyagawa) was born in 1726, though little is known about his personal life. He came to Edo to study haiku, poetry, and painting under Shunsui, but soon shifted his attention to ukiyo-e. Originally a member of the Torii school, Shunsho broke away from this reigning school of actor prints to establish his own, more realistic style known as the Katsukawa School. He taught many great ukiyo-e artists, including Shuncho, Shunko, Shunei, and Shunro (Hokusai). The root “shun” identifies artists of the Katsukawa school. Some of his paintings still exist, largely portraying *bijin* (beautiful women) in genre scenes.

Shunsho is one of the great masters of ukiyo-e. He is known for the balance of strength and delicacy in his designs. While his early depictions of *bijin* indicate the influence of Harunobu, Shunsho developed a parity of idealism and realism in his prints of kabuki actors. Focusing on the individual rather than the role portrayed, Shunsho marked a pivotal moment in ukiyo-e. From his actor portraits to his backstage views of the theater, Shunsho introduced individualism to *yakusha-e* (actor prints).

Kabuki Actor Nakamura Sukegoro

Medium: Woodblock Print

Date: c. 1770

Signature: Shunsho ga

Size: 12" x 5.75"

Ref #: JPr-21648





Koryusai (1735 - 1790) 湖龍齋

Koryusai Isoda was born into the samurai class as Masakatsu Isoda. His family served the *daimyo* (regional lord) of Tsuchiya, yet Koryusai abandoned this life to move to Edo. He became a *ronin* (a samurai without a master) and commenced his artistic career. Training first as a Kano painter, Koryusai changed his course to printmaking during the mid-1760s. While cited as the pupil of Shigenaga, Koryusai's early prints, signed Haruhiro, suggest the tutelage of Harunobu. Koryusai was a prolific artist, completing illustrations and single-sheet prints alike. In 1776, he released *Models for Fashion*, one of his most important series. He is known for his coveted *kacho-e* (bird-and-flower pictures), *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women), *hashira-e* (pillar prints), and the strong use of orange in his prints. After 1780, Koryusai revived his early Kano training and produced *ishizuri-e* (stone-printed pictures). Soon after this transition, the emperor bestowed Koryusai with the prestigious epithet of "Hokkyo," a high honor at the time. Furthermore, Koryusai was one of the first ukiyo-e artists to use the *oban* format (approximately 14 x 10 in). This size allowed larger compositions and soon became the standard size for ukiyo-e.

Courtesan Hayama from the House of Asahimaruya

Series: Models for Fashion: New Designs of Fresh Young Leaves

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Nishimuraya Yohachi

Date: c. 1776

Signature: Buko Yagenbori Inshi Koryu ga

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Ref #: JP1-22046





Kiyonaga (1752 - 1815) 清長

The son of a bookseller and publisher in Uraga, Kiyonaga was born Shinsuke Sekiguchi in 1752. He moved to Edo in 1765 and began his art education in both printmaking and painting under the direction of Kiyomasu. Following the death of his master, Kiyonaga was adopted as the heir to the Torii family. He was a major printmaker in late 18th century Edo, influenced by the works of Koryusai, Shigenaga and Harunobu. From 1781 to 1788, Kiyonaga dominated ukiyo-e with his prints of *bijin* (beautiful women) and stylish scenes of Edo life. His work had great influence on other ukiyo-e artists and he is recognized for his intelligent use of color and the maturity of his *nishiki-e* (brocade prints) and *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women). In 1787, Kiyonaga arranged for the Torii school to design kabuki signboards. This arrangement would eventually lead to the school's virtual monopoly over the industry. Despite his immense popularity, Kiyonaga turned away from print design in 1790 to focus on painting.

Two Beautiful Courtesans in June

Series: Fuyu Twelve Climates

Medium: Woodblock Print

Date: c. 1780

Signature: Kiyonaga ga

Size: 10.5" x 7.5"

Ref #: JPr-21018





Sharaku (fl. 1794 - 1795) 写楽

Very little is known about Sharaku, save that he lived in Edo. During his ten-month career, his prints were of such high caliber that modern critics compare him to Rembrandt. He produced around 100 known designs, mostly kabuki actors, marked by an air of satire and persistent wit. Sharaku's work was radical for its time. His kabuki portraits allow the viewer an exceptionally intimate understanding of the subject's character. During his lifetime, Sharaku's style proved controversial. It was not until the beginning of the 20th century that his prints were rediscovered and earned him the exceptional reputation he holds today.

Throughout this artistic flowering of the ukiyo-e tradition, artists explored greater realism and began to consider the inner life of the subject, giving way to psychological portraiture. This Golden Age of ukiyo-e is marked by a confidence and maturity, composition and refinement, never before mastered.

Sawamura Sojuro as Nagoya Sanza
and Segawa Kikunojo as Katsuragi

Medium: Woodblock Print with Mica Ground

Publisher: Tsutaya Juzaburo

Seal: Kiwame

Date: c. 1794

Signature: Toshusai Sharaku ga

Size: 14.75" x 9.5"

Ref #: JPr-22017





Utamaro (1753 – 1806) 歌麿

Utamaro is one of the masters of woodblock printing. The scholar and artist Sekien served as Utamaro's teacher until Seiken's death in 1788. While the influence of Kiyonaga courses through his early prints, Utamaro's unique style soon asserts itself. A prolific artist, he also produced illustrated books and paintings. Around 1791, he directed his focus to half portraits of women on their own, rather than the full-length, group designs that dominated the genre of *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women). In 1804, he ran into legal trouble with the Tokugawa Shogunate for producing prints relating to a historical scene. The print depicted the 16th century ruler Hideyoshi with his wife and courtesans, entitled *Hideyoshi and His Five Concubines*. The work was deemed disrespectful and Utamaro was sentenced and imprisoned for a short time. Some believe that this broke his spirit, for he died in Edo two years later. Utamaro's enormous popularity was not limited to Japan. He was one of the first ukiyo-e artists to be known in Europe and inspired many Western artists.

Utamaro is especially known for his portraits of women, renowned for his ability to subtly capture their private lives. From courtesans to mothers, he offered a behind-the-scenes understanding of Edo's women. Slender and graceful, Utamaro's women bear small features and delicate color. He also produced many *okubi-e* (big-head portraits). During the 19th century, Utamaro entranced Western artists with his designs. Mary Cassatt was particularly taken by Utamaro's work, exclaiming, "you who want to make color prints, you couldn't imagine anything more beautiful." ¹

Courtesan Hisui from Ogiya

Medium: Woodblock Print
 Publisher: Tsutaya Juzaburo
 Date: c. 1798
 Signature: Utamaro hitsu
 Size: 14.5" x 10"
 Ref. #: JPr-20972

1. Mathews, Nancy Mowll. *Mary Cassatt: A Life*. New York: Villard, 1994. Print, 194.



あゝこのすも光澤氏もかありし
夕陽とそそのる扇や 菱花堂主
舞糸依

扇屋

翡翠

そのは
うは

哥
林呂
筆



Eishi (1756 - 1829) 栄之

Eishi was born into the Hosoda samurai family as Tokitomi Fujiwara-no-Jibukyo in 1756. Living in Edo, Eishi began his career in painting, studying first in the Kano school, followed by Bunryusai. Employing the Kano style, Eishi became a court painter and high court official to the Tokugawa Shogun Ieharu. In fact, it was the shogun who bestowed the name Eishi on the artist. Around the age of thirty, Eishi left the court and began working in ukiyo-e. Initially influenced by the Torii school, he soon found inspiration in Utamaro's spellbinding beauties and began producing *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women). In 1800, he left printmaking and returned to painting.

Defined by aristocratic elegance, Eishi's women appear tall, lean and graceful. It is said that his prints were so highly regarded in their time that even the imperial family sought to own them. His paintings are considered masterpieces of the ukiyo-e school.

Autumn Moon at Akashi

Series: Eight Views of Genji in the Floating World

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Nishimuraya Yohachi

Seal: Kiwame (censor seal)

Date: c. 1798

Signature: Eishi zu

Size: 14.5" x 9.25"

Ref #: JPr-22059





Toyokuni (1769 - 1825) 豊国

The son of a puppet sculptor, Toyokuni was born and worked in Edo. Entering the studio of Toyoharu at the age of 14, Toyokuni drew inspiration from the famous contemporary artists around him, particularly from the great Utamaro. Toyokuni produced elegant courtesans, fine actor prints, book illustrations, and paintings. He had a strong reputation during his lifetime and taught a host of talented students, including Kunisada and Kuniyoshi.

Considered one of the most influential ukiyo-e artists, Toyokuni catapulted the Utagawa school to fame and completed remarkable work depicting beautiful women and kabuki actors. During the early 1790s, his works focused on courtesans. His beauties bear an elegance and idealism indicative of the period. These works set a standard for *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women) to come. Through the 1790s and 1800s, Toyokuni not only captured actors' stage roles, but also their private lives and individual personalities in his *yakusha-e* (actor prints).

Beautiful Women Making a Giant Snowball

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Izumiya Ichibei

Seal: Kiwame (censor seal)

Date: c. 1796

Signature: Toyokuni ga

Size: 14.75" x 9.75"

Ref #: JPr-22055



Hokusai (1760 - 1849) 北斎

Hokusai Katsushika was born in Edo as Tamekazu Nakajima. Adopted by the mirror maker Ise Nakajima, Hokusai was raised as an artisan, learning to engrave at an early age. By age 14, he served as an apprentice to a woodcarver, by age 18 he began studying ukiyo-e printmaking with Shunsho. Hokusai dedicated himself to the Katsukawa school until 1785, when he was dismissed due to a disagreement with Shunsho. Between 1785 and 1797, he produced *surimono* (lavish, privately commissioned prints), brush paintings, and book illustrations under several different *go* (artist names). In 1797, Hokusai freed himself of all school associations and became an independent artist under the name Hokusai, though he continued to use a wide array of *go*. He released the first of his *Manga* volumes in 1814, capturing the spectrum of daily life with a spontaneous and sketch-like quality.

Hokusai achieved great fame through his *meisho-e* (famous place pictures), such as the acclaimed series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* (1826-1833), which includes the iconic *Great Wave Off Kanagawa*. Incorporating Western perspective and daring composition into his landscapes, Hokusai revolutionized the Japanese landscape, capturing familiar locations with innovative technique. In the 1820s, Prussian blue entered Japan through Dutch traders at Nagasaki. Hokusai was quick to explore this new pigment. This rich, opaque shade enabled a greater sense of depth than traditional colorants.

Between 1817 and 1835, Hokusai's personal life was unsettled. While his artistic career flourished and his students proliferated, two of Hokusai's marriages ended. Continually changing residences, he moved between Edo, Nagoya, Osaka and Kyoto. He passed away in April of 1849. Even after his death, Hokusai's prints had a profound influence on Western art and the development of Japonisme.

Inume Pass in Kai Province

Series: The 36 Views of Mt. Fuji

Medium: Woodblock Print

Date: c. 1830

Signature: Hokusai Aratame litsu hitsu

Size: 10" x 15.25"

Ref #: JPR5023



Kunisada 国貞 (aka Toyokuni III 三代豊国) (1786-1864)

Born in the Honjo district of Edo as Kunisada Tsunoda, Kunisada's family owned a small hereditary ferryboat service. Though his father, an amateur poet, died when Kunisada was a child, the family business provided some financial security. During his childhood, he showed considerable promise in painting and drawing. Due to strong familial ties with literary and theatrical circles, he spent time studying actor portraits.

At age 14, he was admitted to study under Toyokuni, head of the Utagawa school. Kunisada's work embodies the characteristics of the Utagawa school, focusing on traditional subjects such as kabuki, *bijin* (beautiful women), *shunga* (erotic prints), and historical prints. His first known print dates to 1807, his first illustrated book to 1808. Kunisada's career took off from the beginning. Many of his works became overnight successes and he was considered the "star attraction" of the Utagawa school. He signed his works "Kunisada," sometimes with the studio names of Gototei and Kochoro affixed. In 1844, he adopted the name of his teacher and became Toyokuni III. Kunisada passed away in 1864 in the same neighborhood that he was born. He was 70 years old. Kunisada was a highly popular, and the most active, ukiyo-e artist of the 19th century. In his time, his reputation surpassed those of his contemporaries Hiroshige and Kuniyoshi.

Ichikawa Danjuro as Minamoto no Yoshitsune

Series: Popular Kabuki Actors' 108 Heroes of the Suikoden

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Kawamasa

Seal: Kiwame (censor seal)

Date: c. 1827

Signature: Oko Kunisada ga

Size: 14.75" x 10.25"

Ref #: JPr-21034



Gakutei (1786 – 1868) 岳亭

Born Harunobu Sugawara in Edo, Gakutei Yashima studied printmaking under Shuei and Hokkei. He moved to Osaka in the 1830s, designing landscape studies of his new home with a delicate and decorative style likely influenced by Hokusai. In addition to printmaking, he wrote *kyōka* (comic poems), often illustrating these verses in his prints. While a talented woodblock artist, Gakutei was also known throughout Japan as a writer. He translated and illustrated the 16th century Chinese novel *Journey to the West* into Japanese.

Gakutei's oeuvre consists primarily of *surimono*. These deluxe, limited-edition prints blend the rich visual imagery of ukiyo-e with the ethereal art of poetry. These works were privately commissioned by poetry societies and prosperous patrons of the arts, often in celebration of the New Year, poetry competitions, and other special occasions. Most were printed with a light verse or clever aphorism and employed the most lavish printing techniques. These marvels of woodblock printing employed the finest handmade papers with generous use of gold, silver, bronze, mica, embossing and lacquer.

Filial Son in Shinano

Series: The Twenty-Four Japanese Paragons of the Filial Piety

Poet: Chiyonoya Matsufuru and Umenoya Suzumeko

Medium: Woodblock Print

Seal: Sadaoka

Date: c. 1822

Signature: Gakutei

Size: 8" x 7"

Ref #: JPr-20988



Eizan (1787 – 1867) 英山

A native of Edo, Eizan Kikugawa was born as Toshinobu Omiya in 1787. He began his artistic career studying with his father Eiji Kikugawa, a Kano painter and fan maker, before pursuing printmaking under Hokusai's pupil Hokkei. From the start of the 19th century to his retirement, Eizan was leading artist of *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women) and *shunga* (erotic prints). He is considered the founder of the Kikugawa style. After 1830, he worked almost exclusively as a painter until his death in 1867.

Eizan admired and followed in the footsteps of Utamaro, despite the fact that he never trained with him. Working primarily in the genre of *bijin-ga*, Eizan captures beautiful women with sensibility and lyricism, imbuing them with an elegance and graceful classicality. Though the increased demand for ukiyo-e during the early 19th century caused some artists to rush their designs, Eizan resisted this pressure, maintaining impeccable design skills throughout his career.

Beautiful Woman and Chrysanthemums

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Izumiya Ichibei

Seal: Kiwame (censor seal)

Date: c.1815

Signature: Eizan hitsu

Size: 15" x 10"

Ref #: JPR5954



風流
美人
蜀山

英山筆

ORF

Eisen (1790 - 1848) 英泉

Born to the well-known calligrapher Shigeharu, Eisen worked as a painter, printmaker and illustrator in Edo. As a young man, he studied Kano painting with Hakkeisai before pursuing illustration and printmaking under Eizan. It is said that Eisen was a brothel owner and held the reputation of a debaucher and a man of questionable personal conduct. Though he completed masterful nature studies and landscapes, he is best known for his beautiful women. In addition to his artistic oeuvre, Eisen authored *Zoku Ukiyo-e Ruiko*, an edited account of the history of ukiyo-e.

As ukiyo-e achieved an unprecedented popularity in the 1800s, *bijin* (beautiful women) were the stars of this period. Eisen's beauties present a particular type of femininity: willful, self-assertive, voluptuous and vivacious. Balancing bold compositions with intricate kimono designs, Eisen's *bijin-ga* bear a quiet sensuality.



Cherry Blossoms on the Bank of the Sumida River

Medium: Woodblock Print
 Publisher: Ezakiya Tatsuzo
 Seal: Kiwame (censor seal)
 Date: c. 1838
 Signature: Keisai Eisen ga
 Size: 14.5" x 29.25"
 Ref #: JPr-21039



Tamikuni (fl. 1823-1828) 多美国

A member of the Osaka school, Tamikuni Toyokawa designed actor prints. Like Sharaku, little is known about his life, though some have suggested that Tamikuni is an early name of another Osaka artist.

Kyoto, Osaka and Edo were the major centers of Japan during the 17th through 19th centuries. Osaka's population was around 400,000. As Edo had the Yoshiwara, Osaka also possessed a legalized prostitution district, the Shinmachi, but the scale was much smaller. Thus, there are far fewer designs, printed in smaller editions. *Osaka-e* stand as a distinct genre in ukiyo-e. They also can be referred to as Kansai prints (the area around Osaka) or Kamigata prints (name for the Kansai region). Osaka prints focus primarily on kabuki scenes and actor portraits, though *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women) were also produced. Beyond single-sheet prints, the Osaka's artists produced images for *kaomise*, the seasonal "face showing" of the actors set to perform for a particular theater season. Towards the end of the 18th century, advertisement extended to the production of *banzuke* (playbills).

Arashi Kitsuzaburo as Sumo Wrestler Horikoma Chokichi

Medium: Woodblock Print

Date: c. 1825

Signature: Tamikuni ga

Size: 14.75" x 10.25"

Ref #: JP5032



Hiroshige (1797 - 1858) 広重

Born in Edo as Tokutaro Ando, Hiroshige grew up in a minor samurai family. His father belonged to the firefighting force assigned to Edo Castle. It is here that Hiroshige was given his first exposure to art: legend has it that a fellow fireman tutored him in the Kano school of painting, though Hiroshige's first official teacher was Rinsai. Though Hiroshige tried to join Utagawa Toyokuni's studio, he was turned away. In 1811, the young artist entered an apprenticeship with the celebrated Utagawa Toyohiro. After only a year, he was bestowed with the artist name Hiroshige. He soon gave up his role in the fire department to focus entirely on painting and print design. During this time he studied painting, intrigued by the Shijo school. Hiroshige's artistic genius went largely unnoticed until 1832.

In his groundbreaking series, *The 53 Stations of the Tokaido* (1832-1833), Hiroshige captured the journey along the Tokaido road, the highway connecting Edo to Kyoto, the imperial capital. With the Tokugawa Shogunate relaxing centuries of age-old restrictions on travel, urban populations embraced travel art and Hiroshige became one of the most prominent and successful ukiyo-e artists. He also produced *kacho-e* (bird-and-flower pictures) to enormous success. In 1858, at the age of 61, he passed away as a result of the Edo cholera epidemic.

Hiroshige's work continues to convey the beauty of Japan and provide insight into the everyday life of its citizens. The appeal of his tender, lyrical landscapes was not restricted to the Japanese audience. Hiroshige's work had a profound influence on the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists of Europe: Toulouse-Lautrec was fascinated with Hiroshige's daring diagonal compositions and inventive use of perspective, Van Gogh literally copied two prints from *100 Famous Views of Edo* in oil paint. One of these prints, *Plum Garden at Kameido*, can be seen on the opposite page.

Plum Garden at Kameido

Series: One Hundred Famous Views of Edo
 Medium: Woodblock Print
 Publisher: Uwoya Eikichi
 Seal: Aratame (censor seal) and Date seal
 Date: 1857
 Signature: Hiroshige ga
 Size: 14.25" x 9.25"
 Ref #: JPr-21628



Kuniyoshi (1797 - 1861) 国芳

The son of silk dyer, Kuniyoshi Utagawa was born into the Igusa family in Edo. Little is known about his very early years, though he is said to have shown remarkable talent from a young age. Kuniyoshi began his ukiyo-e career as a pupil of Shunei. At age 14 he was accepted to study the art of woodblock printing under Toyokuni I and, in time, would become one of his most successful students. In 1814, he left Toyokuni's studio to pursue a career as an independent artist. Initially, he had little success, selling tatami mats in order to support himself. However, his fortunes changed in 1827 with his dramatic series *108 Heroes of the Suikoden*. From that point on, the public hungered for his portrayals of famous samurai and legendary heroes. Kuniyoshi worked in all genres, producing some brilliant landscapes and charming *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women). He died in the spring of 1861 from complications of a stroke.

In direct contrast to the peaceful views of a scenic Japan provided by Hiroshige and Hokusai, the following decades saw a rise of the fierce, fearsome and fantastical in ukiyo-e. Kuniyoshi welcomed this changing public taste. He had a ravenous imagination and the full scope of his work reveals an aesthetic sensibility capable of assimilating almost any experience. No doubt, however, his particular genius felt most at home in the world of martial glory, where epic battles decided the fate of empires and fierce warriors clashed to the death. His imagery was so popular in his time that he received requests for tattoo designs.

Mase Magoshiro Masatatsu

Series: Biographies of the Loyal Retainers

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Ebiya Rinnosuke

Seals: Kinugasa and Hama

Date: c. 1847

Signature: Ichiyusai Kuniyoshi ga

Size: 14" x 9.5"

Ref #: JPr-22420

誠忠義士傳

間勢孫四郎

正辰

孫四郎ハ久々夫正明の
實子あり劍術手練の
達人也兼て刀脇差の柄ハ
平打の木綿赤い巻切柄の心持めて
手の内能を専一ふ心係兼て手痛さをこころを
討死の覚期あくる時置一更あられ討入の
時初め半弓あて矢種限り敵を射立
懸て弓を捨鎧を取て戦ひける小座敷の庭めて
鳥井利右衛門小出合山く向ハ山と云合(けり)あ
暗きこれあて腕とい知且つと川と云(ね合言
葉ハ正一敵と思ひくハ鎧を取て突か
鳥井も速に引く主人の身の上心
りこあ居間(竹んと思ひく)と汝小
後を看せんも惜ひさのんを抜あは
間勢正辰も望所と上段下段秘術を
盡し戦ひける小正辰過て雪ふり泉水へ
轉ひ落けれハ鳥井ハ得たりと刀を振あげ
真向微塵と討候既ハ斯より見へく
大星カ弥過小見を見たりハハ退取てひき
射狙ひ違ハ鳥井ハ胸元射通せハ痛手小
ひきを孫四郎下より横切せらハ切先
鳥井ハあはより乳の下まで切あられ
叫もあは後居小倒して死うけり孫四郎も
踊り上り衣類の水を絞もあは猶奥庭(切入り

應需
一筆芥誌

三甲齋
國廿才画

金澤老林

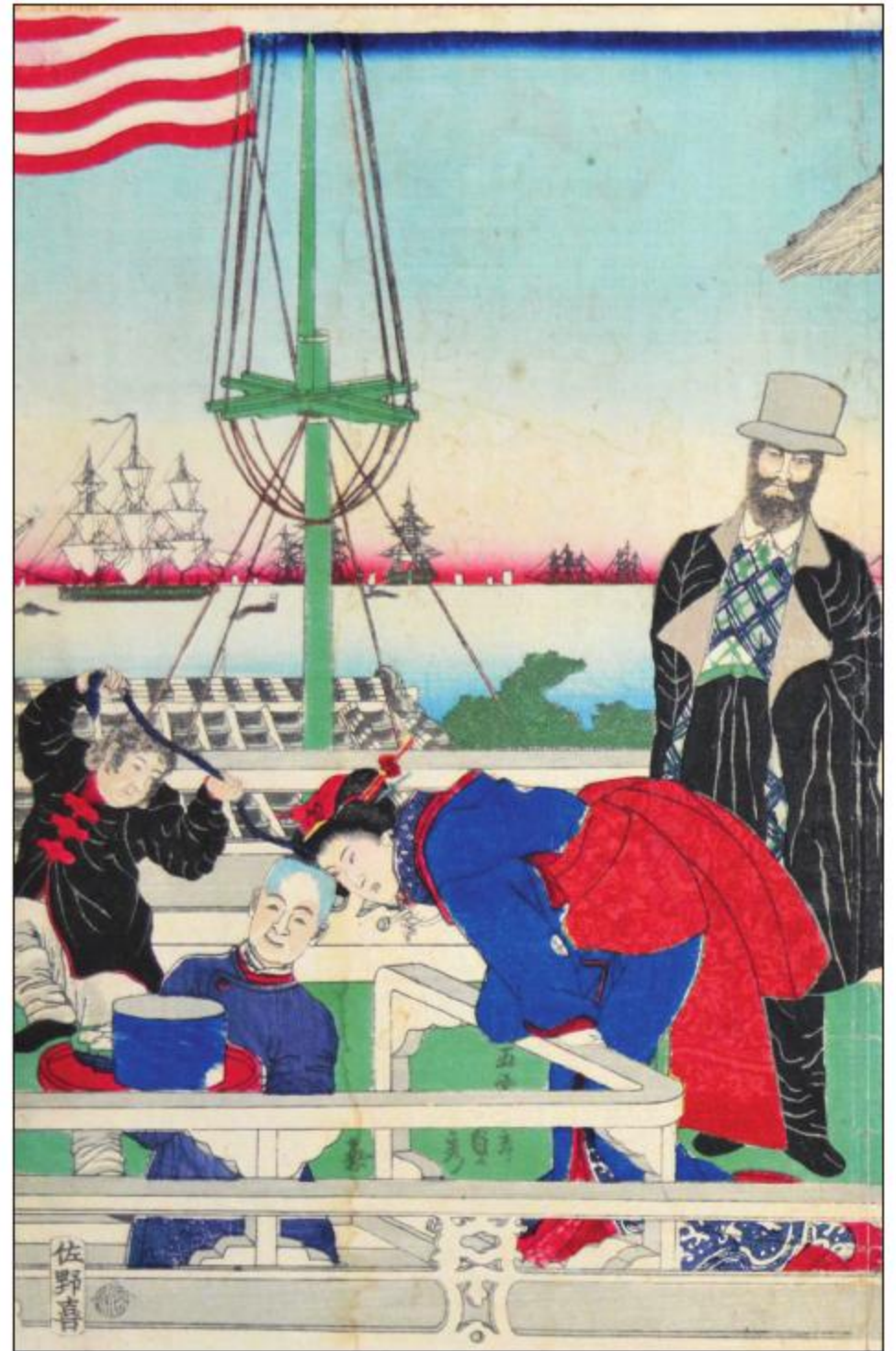
四上



Sadahide (1807 – 1873) 貞秀

Sadahide Utagawa went by several names during his career, but was born Kenjiro Hashimoto in 1807. Working in both Edo and Yokohama, he was one of Kunisada's most accomplished pupils. His compositional style was greatly influenced by Western art, offering extensive studies of perspective, sometimes depicting his subjects from a bird's eye view. Sadahide was one of eleven Japanese printmakers who exhibited their work at the Paris International Exposition of 1866, from which he received the Légion d'Honneur.

In 1854, the Convention of Kanagawa established formal U.S. trade with Japan. Four years later, the Harris Treaty of 1858 opened two more trade ports to the United States. The Ansei Treaties (1858) followed, extending trade to the Netherlands, Russia, France and England. The foreigners of these five nations poured into the port of Yokohama, just south of modern Tokyo. During his time, Sadahide produced a number of acclaimed studies of Westerners known as *yokohama-e*. He stayed true to the ukiyo-e spirit by continuing to capture the everyday, a world that now featured baroque architecture, hooped skirts, and violins. Sold by booksellers and vendors, these prints illustrated the curious machines and imported fashions entering Japan, as well as imagined renderings of the foreigners' homelands.



Foreign Merchantile Mansion in Yokohama

Medium: Woodblock Print

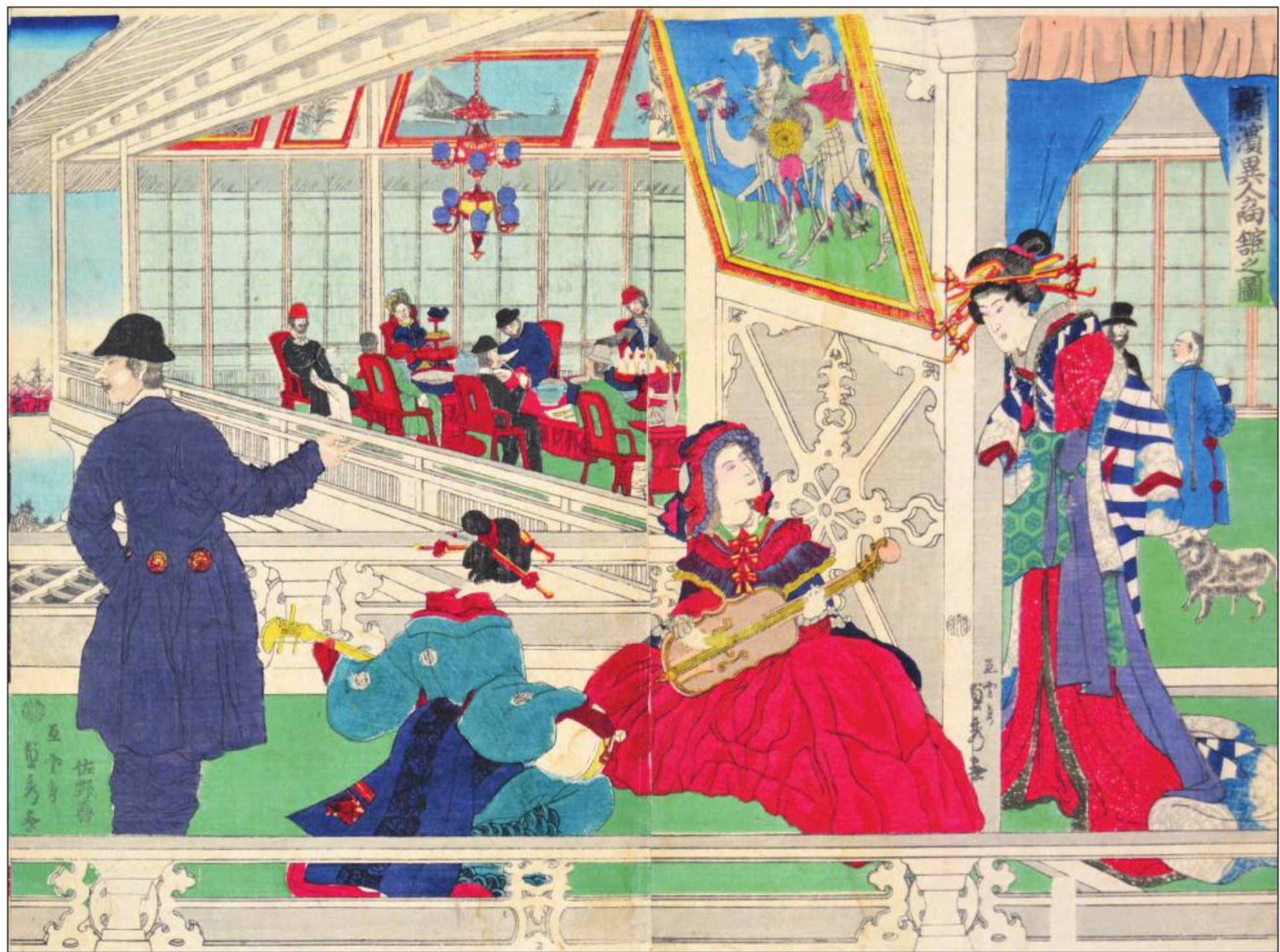
Publisher: Sanoya Kihei

Date: 1861

Signature: Gountei Sadahide ga

Size: 14.25" x 28.5"

Ref. #: JPr-20374



Zeshin (1807 - 1891) 是真

Born in Edo, Zeshin Shibata (né Kametaro Shibata) was the son of a sculptor. At the age of 11, he began to apprentice in a lacquer workshop. As his artistic pursuits transitioned to painting, Zeshin studied under Nanrei, before moving to Kyoto and the tutelage of Toyohiko Okamoto. Zeshin continued his lacquer training under Koma Kansai II to become one of the greatest lacquer artists of the 19th century. Zeshin's lacquer experience is evident through his mastery of *urushi-e* (lacquer prints), as well as his Shijo-style paintings. As a printmaker, he explored natural subjects, Japanese legends, and history. Though the shift from the Edo to the Meiji period proved a tumultuous transition for Japan, Zeshin remained steady in his work. In 1875, he served as the official representative of Japan at an exhibition in Vienna, and again in Philadelphia in 1876. By the end of his life, Zeshin belonged to the Imperial Art Academy and was an appointed member of the Art Committee of the Imperial Household (1890).

White Mice

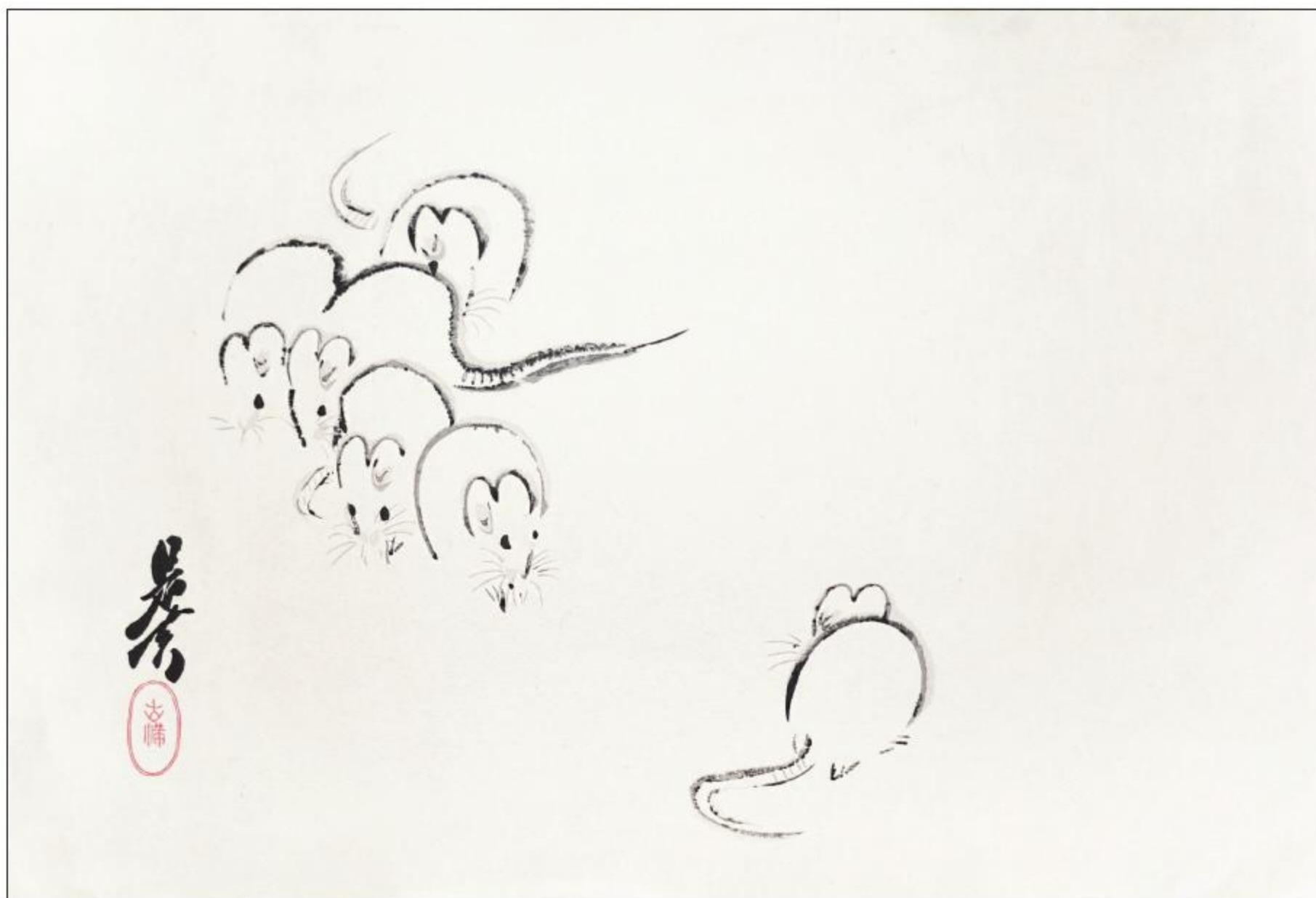
Medium: Woodblock Print

Seal: Koman

Date: c. 1880

Signature: Zeshin Size: 12" x 18"

Ref #: JPr-21047



Kunichika (1835 - 1900) 国周

Kunichika Toyohara was born Yasohachi Arakawa, the son of a public bathhouse proprietor in the artisan section of Edo. As a young man, he studied with the ukiyo-e artist Chikanobu, from whom he received his artist name. He then apprenticed under Kunisada and began to produce actor prints in the Utagawa style, though he never used the Utagawa name. Kunichika married and had one daughter, though his marriage ended due to his questionable personal conduct.

Known for his actor *okubi-e* (big-head portraits), Kunichika captured a traditional genre with the bold new colors of aniline dyes. He made great use of the deep, scarlet red to dramatic effect. In addition, he produced some historical prints and journalistic illustrations. Passionate about kabuki theater, Kunichika regularly spent time backstage, sketching the actors and watching the plays. This wealth of personal experience in the theater lends an intimacy to his impeccable *yakusha-e* (actor prints). Before the Meiji Restoration of 1867, Kunichika was chosen by the Japanese government to present his work at the 1867 World Exhibition in Paris.



Ichikawa Danjuro as Kumagai Naozane and Onoe Kikugoro as Taira no Atsumori at the Ichinotani Battle

Medium: Woodblock Print

Seal: Toyohara-ga-in

Date: 1898

Signature: Toyoharuro Kunichika hitsu

Size: 14" x 27.75"

Ref #: JPr-21196



Chikanobu (1838 - 1912) 周延

Born in Niigata prefecture, Chikanobu Toyohara (né Naoyoshi Hashimoto) began his life as a samurai in the shogun's court. He was trained in Kano school painting but shifted his attention to ukiyo-e around the Meiji Restoration of 1867. He began his printmaking career under the tutelage of Utagawa masters Kuniyoshi, Kunisada and Kunichika. Like many of his contemporaries, Chikanobu also worked as a newspaper illustrator. He designed prints in all genres, from kabuki actors to historical military scenes, but he is most recognized for his portrayal of women's fashions, pastimes and customs. These works trace the movement of traditional Japanese culture into the more modern world that emerged after Commodore Perry's arrival in 1854 and the resulting modernization. While many of the prints from this era feature the bright, opaque appearance of aniline dyes, Chikanobu maintains an aspect of subtlety even with the use of these synthetic colors.

Young Girl Under a Parasol

Series: True Beauty
Medium: Woodblock Print
Publisher: Akiyama Buemon
Date: 1897
Signature: Yoshu Chikanobu
Size: 14" x 9.25"
Ref #: JPr-22024



Yoshitoshi (1839-1892) 芳年

The son of a Tokyo physician, Yoshitoshi Tsukioka (né Kinzaburo Yoshioka) is considered one of the last great masters of ukiyo-e. As a young boy he showed remarkable talent and began to study under the renowned Kuniyoshi at the age of 12. Yoshitoshi also studied under Yosai and was adopted by the Tsukioka family.

As modernization pushed ahead, Yoshitoshi suffered a nervous breakdown in 1872, living in poverty and ceasing all artistic production. A year later, he resumed working; adopting the artist name Taiso and fulfilling his creative potential. In 1885, he began one of his most acclaimed series, *100 Views of the Moon*. In the spring of 1892, he suffered his final mental breakdown and was committed to the Sugamo Asylum. On the 9th of June 1892, he died of a cerebral hemorrhage at the age of 53.

Yoshitoshi's work is known for its eerie and imaginative component. He worked in a Japan undergoing rapid change, straddling the domains of the old, feudal systems and the new, modern world. His considerable imagination and originality imbued his prints with a sensitivity and honesty rarely seen in ukiyo-e of this time period. From ghost stories to folktales, graphic violence to the gentle glow of the moon, Yoshitoshi not only offers compositional and technical brilliance, but also unfettered passion.



Fujiwara no Yasumasa Plays the Flute by Moonlight

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Akiyama

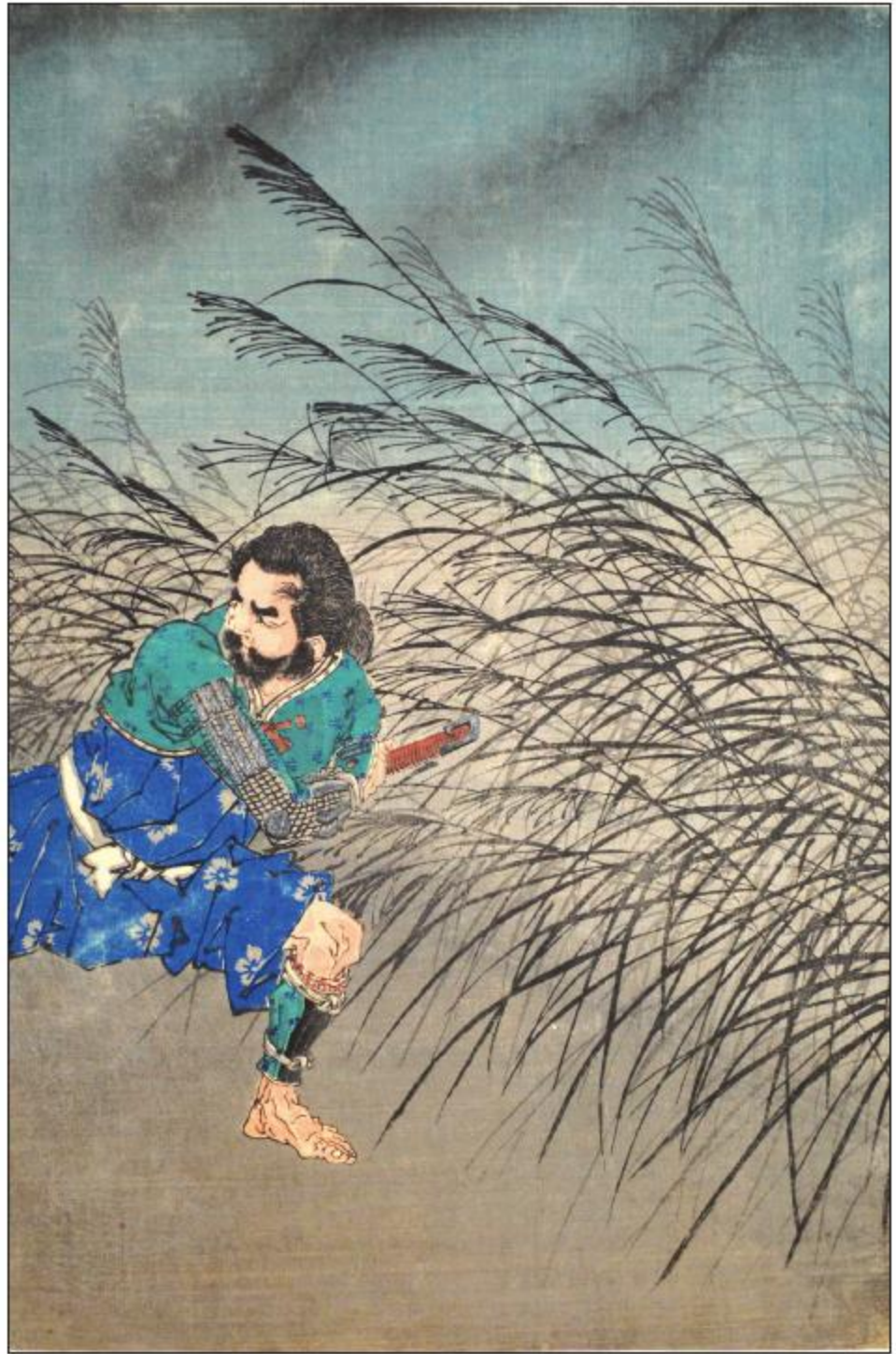
Seals: Taiso and Yoshitoshi

Date: 1883

Signature: Oju Taiso Yoshitoshi sha

Size: 14.5" x 27.75"

Ref #: JP1314



Kiyochika (1847 - 1915) 清親

Kiyochika Kobayashi grew up in a rapidly changing Japan. Born in Edo, he was the son of a minor government official. Kiyochika studied Japanese painting with Kyosai and Zeshin, as well as oil painting under the instruction of Charles Wirgman. Inspired by imported copper etchings and lithography, Kiyochika soon turned his attention to woodblock printing. He was heavily influenced by Western art and techniques, even learning the principles of photography. He not only explored the new world of color introduced by aniline dyes, but also delved into studies of light and shadow in his prints. As magazines and newspapers gained popularity under Emperor Meiji, Kiyochika illustrated current events and military campaigns. In 1894, he opened his own school. He worked right up until his death in 1915.

Publishing his first work in 1876, Kiyochika's prints would come to reflect the changing landscape of the Meiji Period, the shift from the floating world of Edo to a modern Tokyo. These works reflect the influx of Western technologies, evidenced by clock towers, railroads and horse drawn carriages. He also completed numerous illustrations and sketches of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. These prints of the 1880s and 90s further emphasize the military prowess that defined Japan's new nationalism. The genre of *senso-e* (war prints) became popular, fitting into the imperial slogan of *Bunmei Kaika*. Meaning "Civilization and Enlightenment," this policy emphasized military might and booming industry as the key characteristics of a modern nation.



Braving the Bitter Cold, Camp at Yingkou

Medium: Woodblock Print

Seal: Kiyochika

Date: 1895

Signature: Kiyochika

Size: 14" x 27"

Ref #: JPI-20984



Koson (1877 - 1945) 古邨

Koson (aka Shoson or Hoson) was born in Kanazawa with the given name Matao Ohara. He began his artistic career studying painting under the Shijo-style master Kason. Around the turn of the century, Koson became a teacher at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, where he met Ernest Fenollosa, an American collector, scholar and admirer of Japanese art and culture. Around 1905, Koson started to produce woodblock prints. Fenollosa, the curator of Japanese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and an adviser to the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, persuaded Koson to export his bird prints to American art collectors. Between 1900 and 1912 Koson designed mostly *kacho-e* (bird-and-flower pictures), but also a few Russo-Japanese War prints and genre landscapes.

Around 1911, Koson assumed the name "Shoson" and rededicated himself to painting, ceasing printmaking. He returned to printmaking ten years later. By 1926, he met Watanabe and produced prints for him under the name Shoson. Koson changed his name once again, this time to Hoson, when he produced designs collaboratively published by Sakai and Kawaguchi. As Koson used numerous names and seals over the years, dating his work can be difficult. Some of his prints were published in different editions with variations in colors. Koson's earliest and most coveted designs are notable for their narrow formats and soft colors. His reverence for the natural world is apparent in his meticulous detail and unfailing verisimilitude, yielding designs of an unmatched intimate beauty.

White Wisteria and Great Tit in Flight

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Kokkeido

Seal: Koson

Date: c. 1910

Signature: Koson

Size: 19.5" x 8.5"

Ref. #: JP1-21059





Goyo Hashiguchi (1880-1921) 橋口 五葉

Goyo Hashiguchi (né Kiyoshi Hashiguchi) was born in Kagoshima to Kanemitsu Hashiguchi, a samurai and a Shijo-style painter. It is said that the five-needle pine (*goyo no matsu*) in his father's garden inspired Goyo's artist name. He began his career in Kano painting at age 10, moving to Tokyo in 1899 to study with the leading Kano painter Gaho Hashimoto. He soon shifted to Western-style painting under Seiki Kuroda at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, graduating at the top of his class in 1905. Shortly thereafter, the prominent Tokyo woodblock print publisher Watanabe convinced him to design prints. Watanabe published Goyo's first woodblock print, *Nude After Bathing* in 1915. His sensitive portrayal of women in a delicate, serene and infinitely graceful mode led to his immediate popularity. This mastery of line and composition is equally apparent in his tender drawings. These drawings are extremely scarce.

Goyo, an active perfectionist, was not satisfied with Watanabe's workmanship and consequently set up his own workshop. His standards were so high that he rarely allowed his editions to run more than eighty prints. This decision resulted in some of the most technically superb woodblock prints to be produced since the late-18th century.

On February 24, 1921, Goyo died from an ear infection, the aftermath of a severe case of influenza. His death at so early an age was a tragedy to the art world. Goyo's entire artistic career spanned 15 short years, of which only the last five were devoted to woodblock printing. He completed only 14 prints. At his death, Goyo left many works in various stages of completion. Some were all but finished, with full-color proofs already completed; for others, the key block impressions had been taken, and still others had barely progressed beyond the preliminary sketches. Members of Goyo's family brought these unfinished materials to fruition. *Woman with Sash* on the opposite page is one of Goyo's 14 lifetime works.

Woman with Sash in Nagajuban

Medium: Woodblock Print

Seal: Goyo

Date: 1920

Signature: Goyo ga

Size: 18.5" x 5.5"

Ref #: JPr-20929





Hiroshi Yoshida (1876-1950) 吉田 博

Hiroshi Yoshida was born in 1876. He began his artistic training with his adoptive father in Kurume, Fukuoka prefecture. Around the age of twenty, he left Kurume to study with Soritsu Tamura in Kyoto, subsequently moving to Tokyo and the tutelage of Shotaro Koyama. Yoshida studied Western-style painting, winning many exhibition prizes and making several trips to the United States, Europe and North Africa selling his watercolors and oil paintings. In 1902, he played a leading role in the organization of the Meiji Fine Arts Society into the Pacific Painting Association. His work was featured in the exhibitions of the state-sponsored Bunten and Teiten. While highly successful as an oil painter and watercolor artist, Yoshida turned to printmaking upon learning of the Western world's infatuation with ukiyo-e.

Following the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, Yoshida embarked on a tour of the United States and Europe, painting and selling his work. When he returned to Japan in 1925, he started his own workshop, specializing in landscapes inspired both by his native country and his travels abroad. Yoshida often worked through the entire process himself: designing the print, carving his own blocks, and printing his work. His career was temporarily interrupted by his sojourn as a war correspondent in Manchuria during the Pacific War. Although he designed his last print in 1946, Yoshida continued to paint with oils and watercolors up until his death in 1950.

Yoshida was widely traveled and knowledgeable of Western aesthetics, yet maintained an allegiance to traditional Japanese techniques and traditions. Attracted by the calmer moments of nature, his prints breathe coolness, invite meditation, and set a soft, peaceful mood. All of his lifetime prints are signed "Hiroshi Yoshida" in pencil and marked with a *jizuri* (self-printed) seal outside of the margin. Within the image, most prints are signed "Yoshida" with brush and ink beside a red "Hiroshi" seal.

Sacred Bridge

Medium: Woodblock Print

Seal: Jizuri

Date: 1937

Signature: Hiroshi Yoshida (in pencil)

Size: 11" x 16"

Ref #: JP5434





Hasui Kawase (1883-1957) 川瀬 巴水

Born Bunjiro Kawase in Tokyo, Hasui was the son of silk-braid merchant. He began his artistic career studying painting, Japanese-style with Kiyokata, as well as Western-style at the Hakubakai. His talent was clear, exhibiting in the Tatsumi Exhibition of Painting at age 19. However, soon after seeing Shinsui's series *Eight Views of Lake Biwa*, Hasui turned his attention to woodblock printing in 1919. Watanabe was the first to recognize his artistic genius, and Hasui soon became the most popular artist working for this prestigious publisher. Hasui traveled widely in Japan and his subjects are most frequently landscape themes. The prints are based upon small, quick sketches and watercolors taken from nature. Unfortunately, during the earthquake of 1923, all of his woodblocks and over 200 sketches were destroyed. The works that predate this event are extremely scarce and in great demand today. Undaunted, Hasui continued to produce his landscape prints. In 1956, the Japanese government's Committee for the Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage designated *Zojo Temple in Snow* and the documentation of its production as Intangible Cultural Treasures, the greatest artistic honor in postwar Japan. All of his prints are signed "Hasui" with a variety of red seals reading "sui." Though Watanabe published the majority of Hasui's prints, Doi, Kawaguchi, Sakai and others published some as well.

Regarded as a major Japanese landscape artists of the 20th century, Hasui's prints are characterized by their serenity of mood and flawless composition. While his landscapes are markedly modern, these shin hanga prints yearn for a Japan past. The finest prints and drawings of this period have a unique and immediate appeal that rests upon traditional virtues of delicacy, poise and restraint.

Zojo Temple in Snow at Shiba

Medium: Woodblock Print
 Publisher: Watanabe Shozaburo
 Date: 1925
 Signature: Hasui
 Size: 15.25" x 10.5"
 Ref #: JP5144





Kogan Tobari (1882-1927) 戸張 孤雁

A founding member of the Sosaku Hanga movement, Kogan Tobari (né Kamekichi) worked as a sculptor, printmaker and illustrator. Born in the Nihonbashi section of Tokyo, he worked at a bank during the day and attended night school studying English. As the 19th century came to a close, Kogan's English teacher encouraged him to visit the United States. In 1901, he moved to New York, working and studying painting at the Art Student's League. Upon being diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1906, he returned to Japan. Around 1910, the sculptor Morie Ogiwara inspired Kogan to study sculpture at the Saiko Nihon Bijutsuin, where Kogan soon became a member.

Kogan supported himself as a novel illustrator. In 1912, he completed his first woodblock print, *Farmhouse in Autumn*. In 1914, he produced several prints carved in a traditional technique by either Kogan himself or Kishio Koizumi. Kogan founded several associations during his lifetime, including the Japan Watercolor Society (1913) with Hakutei Ishii, and Nihon Sosaku Hanga Kyokai (1918) with other sosaku hanga leaders. He exhibited work at both the first sosaku hanga exhibition in 1919, and posthumously at the 1933 Nihon Hanga Kyokai exhibition. In 1922, he published *Sosaku-Hanga and How to Make Them*. Later in life, Kogan became known for his French-inspired small bronze figures.

Hot Spring Inn

Medium: Woodblock Print (Self-Printed)

Seal: Kogan

Date: 1921

Signature: Kogan

Size: 19" x 14"

Ref #: JPr-21061





Koshiro Onchi (1891-1955) 恩地 孝四郎

The fourth son of Tetsuo Onchi, Koshiro Onchi was born into Tokyo aristocracy. His father tutored the three princes chosen to wed emperor Meiji's daughters. After failing his high school entrance exam in 1909, Onchi pursued oil painting at the Hakubakai school. He enrolled in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1910, first pursuing oil painting, followed by sculpture. In October of 1913, Onchi and classmates Kyokichi Tanaka and Shizuo Fujimori seeded *Tsukubae*, planning the print and poetry magazine that would become an early medium for the sosaku hanga movement. After graduating in 1914, he continued magazine work.

Onchi published his first series of prints, *Happiness* in 1917, participating in the 1919 inaugural Nihon Sosaku Hanga Kyokai exhibition. In 1921, he began art-focused *Natizai*, along with Kenji Otsuki and Fujimori. Onchi dedicated himself to the promotion of printmaking, namely "creative prints," as a legitimate art form. In 1928, following Lindbergh's transatlantic flight, a newspaper hired Onchi to go up in a plane and record the experience in *Sensations of Flight* (1934). Though he made his living through illustration, he contributed to many magazines. He created book covers over the years and published multiple books of his own poetry. In 1949, Onchi received Japan's first prize for book design. A leader and mentor of the sosaku hanga movement, he headed Ichimokukai, a monthly meeting of woodblock artists, from 1939 until the end of the occupation. He belonged to many progressive art movements including the League of Japanese Artists, Japan Abstract Art Club, and the International Print Association. Onchi's early works may be signed "onzi."

Bird

Series: The Book of Poems "Milestones of the Season"

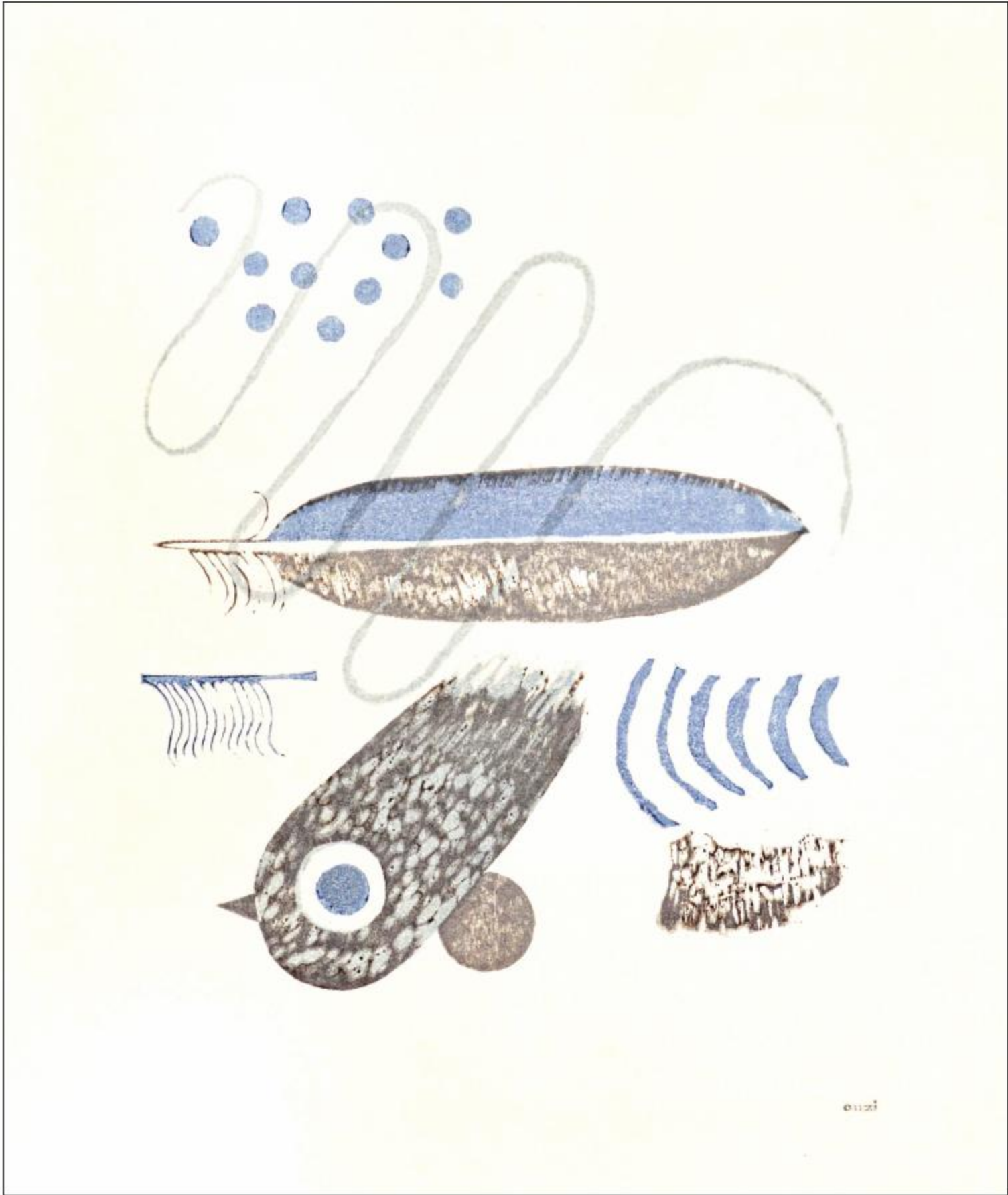
Medium: Woodblock Print (Self-Printed)

Date: 1935

Signature: onzi

Size: 14" x 11.5"

Ref #: JP2-22031





Shinsui Ito (1898 - 1972) 伊東 深水

Shinsui Ito was born in Tokyo as Hajime Ito. His artistic training began at age 12, working in the drawing department of the Tokyo Printing Company before studying with leading Japanese-style painter Kiyokata. By 1916, Shinsui completed his first woodblock print, followed by the series *Eight Views of Lake Biwa* a year later. From 1916 to 1941, Shinsui collaborated with the famous publisher Watanabe, exporting many of these prints to the West. Between 1922 and 1923, Shinsui designed his first set of the beauties (*Twelve Figures of New Beauties*). After the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, Shinsui pursued the genre of *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women), completing two series entitled *Collection of Modern Beauties* (1929-1931 and 1931-1936).

While most recognized for his *bijin-ga*, Shinsui continued painting and designing landscape prints. Inspired by the works of Hasui, Shinsui captured not only the Japanese countryside, but also the Indonesian landscape during his brief time stationed there during the Pacific War. In 1952, Shinsui's mastery of woodblock design was designated as Intangible Cultural Property, an event commemorated with his print *Tresses* (1952). Appointed to the Japan Art Academy in 1958, Shinsui received the Order of the Rising Sun in 1970 before his death in 1972. Truly elegant in appearance and graceful in pose, Shinsui's *bijin-ga* have earned him a reputation as an unrivaled painter of women and a master of design.

Woman Combing Her Hair

Series: Collection of Modern Beauties

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Watanabe Shozaburo

Seal: Shinsui

Date: 1936

Signature: Shinsui ga

Size: 15.5" x 10.5"

Ref #: JPr-20931





Kotondo Torii (1900 - 1976) 鳥居 言人

Kotondo Torii was born in the Nihonbashi district of Tokyo as Akira Saito. He was the only son of Kiyotada, the seventh Torii master and head of the school from 1929 until 1951. Kotondo began his career in 1914 in *yamato-e* (Japanese court painting) under Tomone Kobori, followed by Kiyokata in 1918. Early in his career, Kotondo produced posters and other kabuki focused illustrations for *Entertainment Illustrated Magazine*. He completed the majority of his woodblock prints between 1927 and 1933, working with several publishers including Kawaguchi (1920s) and Ikeda (1930s). After his father's death in 1941, Kotondo assumed the name Torii VIII (Kiyotada V). From 1966 to 1972, he lectured at Nihon University.

Unlike his kabuki-focused Torii predecessors, Kotondo was drawn to the beautiful women of Japan. In both his paintings and his woodblock prints, he portrays these beauties with a delicacy and intimacy unique to his style. He made a total of 21 *bijin* (beautiful women) prints during his career which are highly sought after and internationally collected.

Applying Make-up

Medium: Woodblock Print

Publisher: Sakai and Kawaguchi

Seal: Kotondo

Edition: 85/200 (Foreign export Limited Edition)

Date: 1929

Signature: Kotondo ga

Size: 18" x 11.75"

Ref #: JPr-21054





Shiko Munakata (1903 - 1975) 棟方 志功

Born in Aomori prefecture, Shiko Munakata is best known for his black and white prints and his expressive, sketch-like lines. A self-taught artist, he began his career in oil painting, organizing the Seikokai (Blue Light Group) and exhibiting at Hakujuitsukai, Bunten and Teiten. Munakata changed course in 1926 upon seeing a woodblock print by Sumio Kawakami. After brief instruction from Un'ichi Hiratsuka in 1928, Munakata became active in the printmaking community: he belonged to both Kokugakai (1932-1953) and Nihon Hanga Kyokai (1932-1938), and contributed to many *sosaku hanga* publications. Around 1936, he garnered the support of Soetsu Yamagai and other leaders of the folk art movement. Munakata's work began to heavily feature Buddhist imagery the following year. During the bombing of Tokyo in 1945, he escaped to Toyama prefecture. He continued printmaking and received first prize in international exhibitions held in Lugano (1952), Sao Paulo (1955) and Venice (1956). Visiting the United States in 1959, Munakata spent a year exhibiting his work throughout the country. Horinji Temple in Kyoto bestowed him with the honorary rank of "Hokkyo" upon his return to Japan. In 1962, he received the rank of "Hogan" from Nisseki Temple in Toyama prefecture. Munakata's accolades continued through the end of the decade, including the Medal of Honor (1963), the *Asabi Shimbun* culture prize (1965), and the Order of Cultural Merit (1970).

Washing the Horse

Medium: Woodblock Print (Self-Printed)

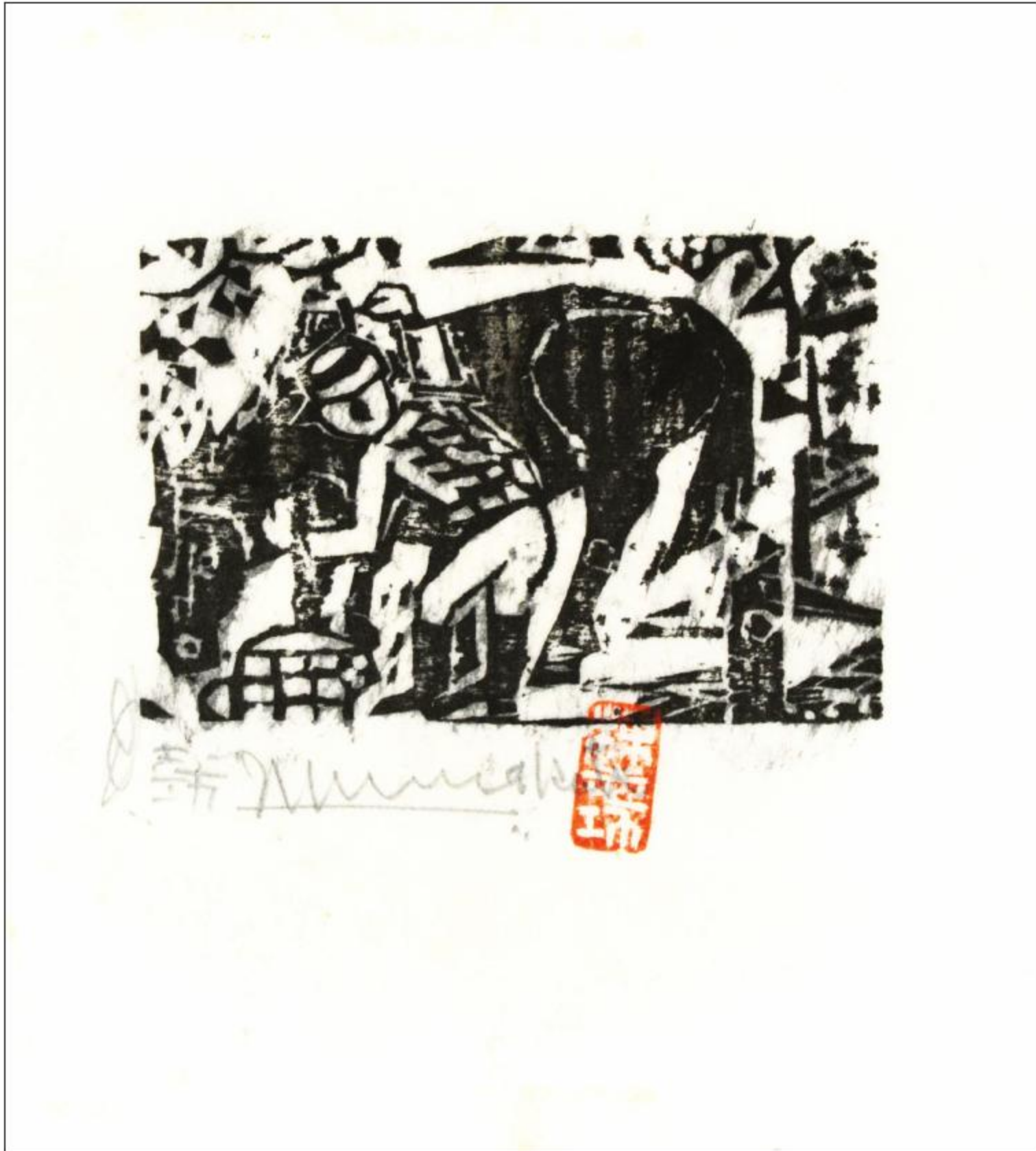
Seal: Munashiko

Date: c. 1940

Signature: Munakata in pencil, Shiko in kanji

Size: 8" x 7"

Ref #: JP2-22029





Kiyoshi Saito (1907-1997) 斉藤 清

Kiyoshi Saito was born in Fukushima prefecture. At the age of five he moved to Otaru in Hokkaido, where he would come to serve as an apprentice to a sign painter. Saito became infatuated with art after studying drawing with Gyokusen Narita and moved to Tokyo in 1932 to study Western-style painting at the Hongo Painting Institute. He began experimenting with woodblock prints and exhibiting his works with Nihon Hanga Kyokai in 1936. Saito mainly worked in oil painting until his invitation from Tadashige Ono to join the Zokei Hanga Kyokai in 1938, at which time Saito made the woodblock print his primary medium. He worked with the Asahi Newspaper Company in 1943, where he met Koshiro Onchi. This chance encounter led to an invitation to Ichimokukai and membership to Nihon Hanga Kyokai in 1944.

Saito's printmaking career was put on hold due to the war. During the occupation, he sold his first print in an exhibit with fellow artists Un'ichi Hiratsuka and Hide Kawanishi. In 1948, Saito exhibited at the Salon Printemps, an event sponsored by Americans for Japanese Artists. At the Sao Paulo Biennale of 1951, Saito won first place for his print *Steady Gaze*. In competition with Japanese oil painting and sculpture, this was a turning point for Japanese printmakers: for the first time in Japanese history, prints overtook painting. This achievement roused the Japanese art establishment. In 1956, Saito was sponsored by the State Department and the Asia Foundation to travel and exhibit around the United States and Europe. As a *sosaku hanga* artist, Saito's prints are self-drawn, self-carved and self-printed. His early works are distinguished by an attention to realism and three-dimensionality. As his style evolved, his prints became flattened and two-dimensional, featuring strong and refined designs with color and texture.

BIZEN

Medium: Woodblock Print (Self-Printed)

Edition: 13/50

Date: 1966

Signature: Kiyoshi Saito

Size: 23.5" x 17.5"

Ref #: JPI-20379





Tadashige Ono (1909-1990) 小野 忠重

Born in Tokyo, Tadashige Ono was an influential member of the *sosaku hanga* movement, producing prints between circa 1929 and 1971. He attended the Hongo Painting Institute from 1924 through 1927 before joining the proletariat art movement in 1929. A founding member of both Shin Hanga Shudan (1932) and Zokei Hanga Kyokai (1937), he worked at the forefront of modern printmaking. Tadashige first exhibited with Nihon Hanga Kyokai in 1936, but withdrew when the organization refused his request to extend membership to all of the members of Zokei Hanga Kyokai. He graduated from Hosei University Higher Normal School's department of Japanese and Chinese languages in 1941 and helped to found the Japan Print Movement Society in 1949. Following the close of World War II, his work gained international popularity. Tadashige's prints appeared in the Tokyo International Print Biennale of 1957 and a Moscow exhibition of modern Japanese prints in 1961. He contributed to *HANGA* and *Shin Hanga* (where he also served as publisher). In addition to his prints, his significant literary contributions concerning woodblock printing span from Chinese prints to modern Japanese printmaking. Tadashige also taught as a visiting professor at Tokyo University of Fine Arts, Aichi University of Fine Arts, Hiroshima University, and Utsunomiya University.

Old House

Medium: Woodblock Print (Self-Printed)

Edition: 3/3

Date: 1957

Signature: T. Ono

Size: 4.75" x 8.75"

Ref. #: JP2-22028





Jun'ichiro Sekino (1914-1988) 関野 準一郎

Jun'ichiro Sekino was born in Aomori prefecture. He began making woodblock prints while still in middle school before formally pursuing etching with Junzo Kon. Active in the print scene, Sekino participated in the art shows *Chokojuto* (1932) and *Shin Hanga* (1935), exhibiting with the Nihon Hanga Kyokai from 1932 forward. After winning the Teiten prize for etching in 1936, he moved to Tokyo in 1939. Sekino continued his studies at the Etching Institute of Takeo Nishida, where he also trained in oil painting and drawing. Sekino commenced his study of woodblock prints with Koshiro Onchi and soon joined the Nihon Hanga Kyokai in 1938, followed by the Kokugakai in 1940. He exhibited worldwide, winning particular acclaim in the United States for his woodblock prints following World War II. In 1958, the Japan-America Society brought Sekino to the United States, where he taught at Oregon State University in 1963. Upon returning to Japan, he assumed a position at Kobe University in 1965 and received the medal of the Imperial Household Agency in 1981.

Sekino's work is greatly inspired by old Japanese and European masters alike, whether Sharaku or Albrecht Durer. The subject of his work varies, though he commonly focused on portraits, landscapes, and semi-abstract designs. Sekino is one of the most influential woodblock print artists of the 20th century.

Sumo Wrestler Asashio

Medium: Woodblock Print with Mica Ground (Self-Printed)

Seal: Jun

Edition: 80

Date: 1984

Signature: Jun. Sekino

Size: 21.5" x 16.5"

Ref #: JP110302





Rikio Takahashi (1917-1999) 高橋 力雄

The son of a *nibonga* (Japanese-style) painter, Rikio Takahashi was born in Tokyo in 1917. He studied woodblock printing with Koshiro Onchi and was an original member of the *sosaku hanga* or “creative print” movement. Takahashi worked with Onchi from 1949 until his teacher’s death in 1955. He was a member of Nihon Hanga Kyokai (joined 1952), Kokugakai and the Graphic Art Club. He has exhibited his work in international competitions and exhibitions. During the 1960s, Takahashi spent two years in California. He believed that art was primarily a form of self-expression. Creating a unique style, he pioneered unorthodox printing techniques to make largely abstract works with distinct tonality. Kyoto’s gardens served as inspiration for much of his work, feeding into his fluid, abstract style. Each design is self-carved and printed, true to the spirit of his teacher Onchi.

Like many *sosaku hanga* artists in postwar Japan, Takahashi strayed from traditional cherry wood. *Katsura* wood became popular amongst *sosaku hanga* artists for it allowed larger blocks and was more affordable than cherry. By 1930, it became the standard wood used by *sosaku hanga* artists. With a light grain, artists could engage with surface texture or achieve unmarred smoothness. Takahashi worked largely with *shina*-faced (veneered) plywood, another readily available and affordable wood.

Niwa (Move and Sway)

Medium: Woodblock Print (Self-Printed)

Edition: 10/50

Date: 1988

Signature: Rikio Takahashi

Size: 24" x 19"

Ref #: JP5134





Gashu Fukami (b. 1953) 深水 賀秀

Raised in Kumamoto Prefecture, Kyushu, Gashu attended Doshisha University in Kyoto, graduating in 1975. During school he discovered the works of Umetaro Azechi and Takeji Asano. These artists inspired Gashu to pursue woodblock printing in 1977, before traveling to the United States in 1978 to study at Kaji Aso Studio in Boston. He returned to Kyoto in 1983, holding his first solo show in 1988. By 1997, he had moved to Nagasaki, before settling in Fukuoka in 1999. Gashu has held multiple solo shows in Japan, as well as at the Ronin Gallery in New York. Self-carved and self-printed, his works carry the spirit of *sosaku hanga* into the contemporary. Striking yet whimsical, Gashu's woodblock prints make the familiar look uncanny, breathing exuberance into the everyday.

One Day of My Daughter

Medium: Woodblock Print (Self-Printed)

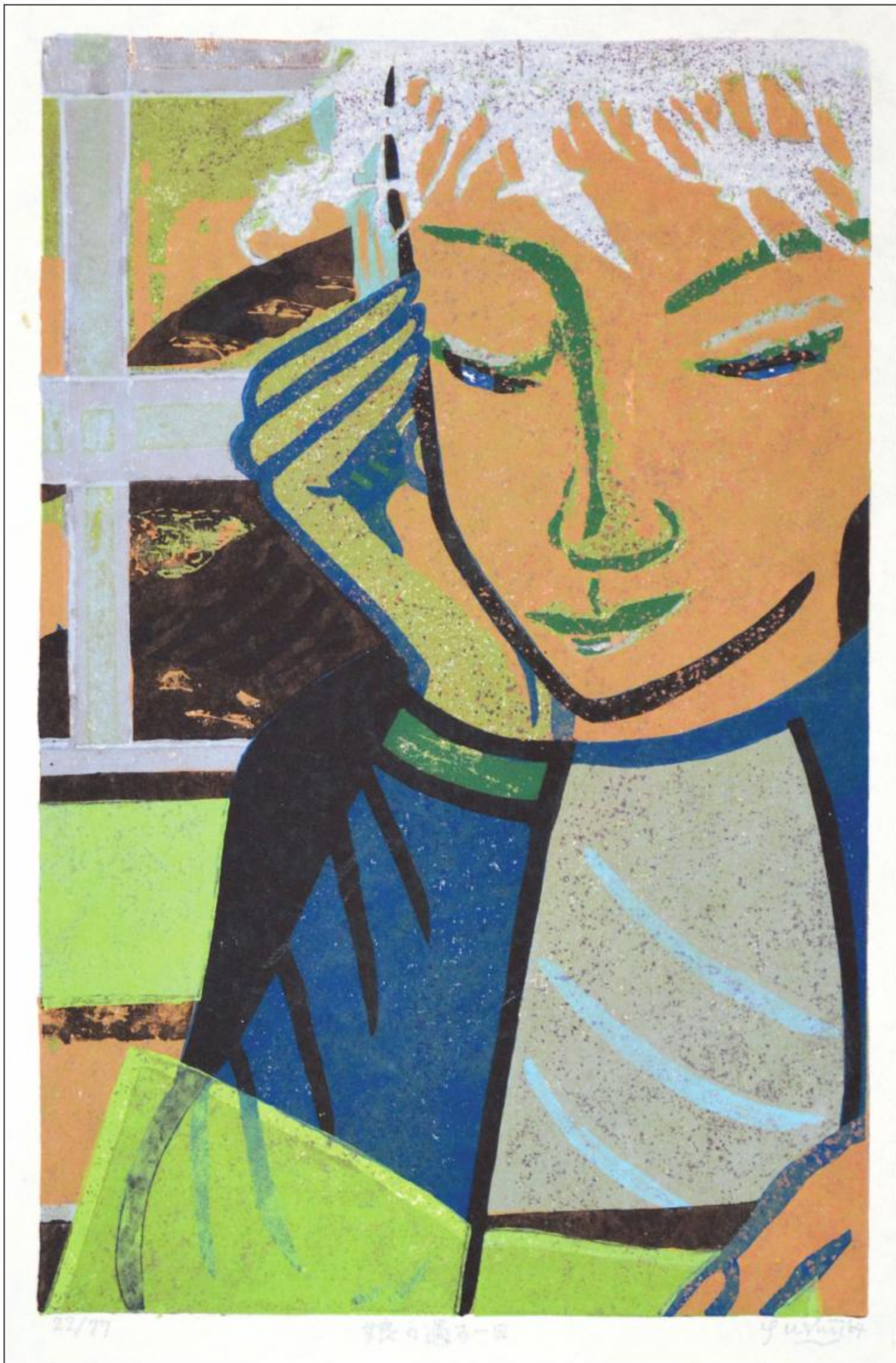
Edition: 22/77

Date: 2004

Signature: Gashu

Size: 14.5" x 9.5"

Ref #: JPI-20382



Glossary

- Banzuke** – Playbill ranking kabuki actors and productions by popularity
- Baren** – Flat tool used to rub the paper against the inked woodblock when pulling an impression
- Benizuri-e** – “Rose-colored pictures,” early form of color printing, recognized by pink and green scheme
- Bijin-ga** – “Pictures of beautiful women,” a dominate genre in ukiyo-e
- Bunmei Kaika** – “Civilization and Enlightenment,” slogan of the Meiji modernization
- Bunten** – State-sponsored art foundation promoting Japanese and Western-style painting and sculpture
- Chonin** – “Townsperson,” the common people of Edo
- Daimyo** – Regional lords, reported to the Shogun
- Egoyomi** – “Calendar prints,” earliest examples of full-color ukiyo-e prints, contained hidden calendars
- Ehon** – Illustrated book
- Go** – One type of artist’s name, many woodblock artists used a variety of names throughout their career
- Harimise** – Custom of lower-class courtesan; she would sit on view in the latticed window of the brothel
- Hashira-e** – “Pillar prints,” tall, narrow, vertical print format
- Hikitsuke kento** – Straight-line guide mark carved on the key block; used to align each subsequent color
- Hosoban** – Rare, narrow prints (13 x 6 in.), popular for actor prints (18th c.) and kacho-e (19th c.)
- Ishizuri-e** – Stone-printed pictures
- Japonisme** – Western art movement inspired the Japanese aesthetic; ukiyo-e were particularly influential
- Jizuri seal** – Self-printed seal
- Kabuki** – Highly stylized, traditional form of Japanese theater
- Kacho-e** – “Bird-and-flower pictures,” a popular genre in woodblock printing
- Kagi kento** – L-shaped guide mark carved into corner of the key block; to align each subsequent color
- Katsura** – Soft wood widely used in sosaku hanga; readily available and larger than cherry wood
- Kaomise** – “Face showing,” presentation of actors and roles for an upcoming kabuki season
- Kibyoshi** – Illustrated popular fiction, identifiable by their yellow covers
- Komasuki** – Curved chisel used since 19th c., chosen tool of the sosaku hanga artists
- Kyoka** – “Crazy verse,” poems filled with word play, parodies and puns; popular on surimono
- Meisho-e** – “Pictures of famous places,” popularized during the 18th century
- Nishiki-e** – “Brocade prints,” or full-color woodblock prints
- Oiran** – Highest class of courtesan during the Edo period
- Okubi-e** – “Big-head pictures,” bust portraits; popular with kabuki subjects and beautiful women alike
- Osaka-e** – Woodblock prints produced in Osaka, largely portraying actors and kabuki productions
- Sakoku** – Shogunal policy of “closed country,” kept Japan in isolation from 1639 to 1853
- Sankin kotai** – Policy of alternate attendance where daimyo split time between Edo and home province
- Senso-e** – War scene genre popular during the Meiji period; depict Sino- and Russo- Japanese wars
- Shin Hanga** – “New prints,” movement that flourished between 1915-40.
- Shina** – Plywood made of Japanese lime, popular among sosaku hanga artists
- Shunga** – “spring pictures,” erotic prints
- Sosaku Hanga** – “Creative prints,” emphasize the artist’s involvement in every stage of the printmaking
- Sumi** – Black ink
- Surimono** – Privately commissioned prints, usually printed in small numbers and lavish materials
- Tokugawa Shogunate** – Ruling military government during the Edo Period
- Ukiyo-e** – “Pictures of the floating world,” woodblock prints capturing the pleasure driven, merchant class culture that flourished in Edo between 1603 and 1868
- Yamato-e** – A form of classical, courtly Japanese-style painting
- Yokohama-e** – Genre depicting foreigners of the five nations that arrived in Yokohama during the 19th c.
- Yoshiwara** – Edo’s legalized prostitution district

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